The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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AT THE DOOR OF THE YEAR.

The corridors of Time
Are full of doors, the portals of closed years:
We enter them no more, though bitter tears
Beat hard against them, and we hear the chime
Of lost dreams, dirge-like, in behind them ring
At memory's opening.

But one door stands ajar,—
The New Year's; while a golden chain of days
Holds it half shut. The eager foot delays
That presses to its threshold's mighty bar;
And fears that shrink and hopes that shout aloud
Around it wait and crowd.

It shuts back the Unknown;
And dare we truly welcome one more year,
Who down the past a mocking laughter hear
From idle aims, like wandering breezes blown,—
We whose large aspirations dimmed and shrank
Till the year's scroll was blank?

We pause beside this door:
Thy year, O God, how shall we enter in?
How shall we hence thy hidden treasures win?
Shall we return in beggary, as before,
When thou art near at hand, with infinite wealth,
Wisdom, and heavenly health?

The footsteps of a child
Sound close beside us. Listen! He will speak;
His birthday bells have hardly rung a week;
Yet has he trod the world's press undefiled.
"Come with me!" hear him through his smiling say:
"Behold, I am the Way!"

Against the door his face
Shines as the sun. His touch is a command:
The years unfold before his baby hand!
The beauty of his presence fills all space.
"Enter through me," he saith, "nor wander more;
For, lo! I am the Door."

And all doors openeth he:
The new-born Christ, the Lord of the New Year,
The threshold of our locked hearts standeth near;
And, while he gives us back love's rusted key,
Our Future on us with his eyes has smiled,
Even as a little child.

—*Lucy Larcom.*

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

"In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul."—PSALM xciv. 19.

Let us, first of all, remember that, while pleasure comes from without, happiness comes from within. Read the book of Ecclesiastes, and find there the utter misery of a king who had fed his heart on all the pleasures and triumphs of the world, and ended by thinking death better than life, and better than both never to have been born. And, on the other hand, consider Milton, sitting in blindness, poverty, fallen on evil days and tongues, compassed round with darkness and dangers,—instead of the book of knowledge of nature's works, only a universal blank,—but with a diviner light shining in his soul than any of which mortal thought could dream. Consider that English statesman of our own day, Fawcett, also blind, but orator, teacher of men, and leader of thought, who was able, as Postmaster-General, to put new vigor into the British post-office; able, on

the floor of the House of Commons, to answer from an unfailing memory, and with perfect accuracy, questions as to dates, numbers, and details of business. These are men of genius; but who that has visited the homes of the poor, the bedside of the incurable sufferer, but has been struck with the serenity, the peace, the satisfaction, which so often causes us who came to give comfort to receive more than we were able to give?

This is, therefore, the first thing to remember, if we wish for a happy year: that pleasure, which comes from without, is evanescent; but happiness, which comes from within, is permanent. Not what we have, but what we are, is the one thing needful. From our own life, being, character, flows true happiness into the heart. "In the multitude of thoughts within me God's comforts delight my soul."

The next suggestion I make is this: pleasures come from transient and successive impulses, happiness flows in a continuous stream. What shall give this continuity to our life? We need some steady purpose, in order not to be swept away by the constant distractions of every day. We ought not to be tossed here and there by the waves of circumstance; not to drift with every chance current, but to steer in a fixed direction. This gives real content. We owe a great deal to daily work; and, if we are not compelled to work, we should seek some regular work to do. Then we have the sense of accomplishment, of going forward, finishing something. Discontent largely comes from not putting ourselves to some steady business, in which we can make progress. Besides the necessary work of every day, it is well to have a plan or useful purpose,—something to do which we are not compelled to do, outside of the mere routine of life. We see little children with some such object, making a collection of seals or stamps or autographs. That is better than having to say, "What shall I do?" It gives a certain continuity even to a child's life, and these little enterprises should be encouraged.

A higher object than this is to have some permanent study, which shall give unity to the year, the pursuit of some art or science to which we feel ourselves attracted. Select something,—botany, geology, the study of the habits of birds or animals. Take a period of history, and make it an object to find out all that can be known in regard to it. Every such study widens and opens as we advance. It leads us to higher elevations, to the survey of a broader horizon. It is a spell drawing us on to new vistas of thought and insight. We begin anywhere, and go everywhere. A man who has some special study, it hardly matters what, has that much purpose in his life. He is saved from desultory thought, develops powers of accurate observation. He has a thread of unity in this pursuit, which is itself an education of the will, giving concentration, grasp, and persistent determination of character.

One special advantage of such a study is that it takes us out of ourselves, while the pursuit of pleasure ends in self. To put ourselves resolutely into some pursuit outside of mere enjoyment is a check to egotism, and enlarges the soul. This, also, helps to make a happy new year.

We do not find happiness by looking for it or seeking it. It comes to us when we are thinking of other things, when we forget ourselves in other persons, other lives or industries, which take us away from ourselves. We must be interested in these for their sake, not for our own, in order to find joy in them. Self-seeking takes us out of sympathy with men and things. By itself alone it would end in utter stagnation of mind and heart, in loneliness of soul and moral death. On the other hand, to have no personal purpose, no self-direction, no independent aim in life, to be wholly at the mercy of outside interests, to be hurried out of ourselves by external influences,—this would end in the loss of individual character, personal conviction, and independent purpose. Every soul is a unit in the sight of God. Every soul is a seed to be unfolded according to its own law, to grow up in all things into what God meant it to be. God has made each one of us for some special purpose, great or small; something that *we* must do, and no other. To one he gives five talents, to another two, and to another one; but each is to use and improve his talent.

This year, then, let us each endeavor to grow,—to grow according to the law of our own being; to be ourselves, and no one else; to be our best selves, and so to find

out our own strength and weakness. Let us be true to ourselves, be faithful to the light God gives us; not be moulded by fashion, but stand on our own feet. This gives every one some strength, some power to do good. In order to give, we must have. In order to help others, we must be something ourselves.

And, then, having something of our own, let us give. Let the life which God sends to our own mind and heart go forth freely to find other minds and hearts. Do good, hoping for nothing again, satisfied that it is blessing enough to be able to bless others, and that it is more blessed to give than to receive. What a happy new year it will be to us if its hours, as they come and go, find us not minding our own good solely, but also the good and joy of others! Let us educate ourselves to think of what others need, of what will sweeten life to them. Let us acquire those habits of kindly action and kindly speech, that aroma of good will which sends joy and strength into other hearts. This care for the happiness of others, this thought of what they need, will be returned to us, full measure, pressed down and running over.

There is a great deal of sympathy in the world, but it needs to be directed by good sense. There is a great deal of good feeling, but it needs to be guided. Impulses of good nature are not enough. The habit we all want is to think of others, to remember them, to put ourselves in their place by an effort of imagination. This is what helps others the most, and for which they are the most grateful. To put ourselves by their side, to enter thoughtfully and patiently into their situation,—this is what is wanted.

> "Not what we give, but what we share;
> For the gift without the giver is bare."

We must take interest in persons as well as in masses, in individuals as well as in classes. When we talk about the laboring classes or the criminal classes or the suffering classes, we put them away from ourselves. Therefore study each man as a person, with personal qualities, needs, wants; study each one lovingly, as a child of God, meant by God for a special end. We study the organization of a plant or an insect with awe, seeing the great creative power therein. How much more shall we look with wonder on that strange, complex phenomenon, a human soul? What depths, what possibilities of good and evil, what unexhausted powers! Outwardly, men seem commonplace, their lives trivial. But put yourself into real relations with any human being, and you are entering the temple of the Most High. I stand in the solemn cathedral, with its multitude of chapels, its soaring columns, its interlacing arches, its gorgeous windows, its gloom and glory. Awe falls on my soul as I remember the prayers, the anthems, the aspirations, which have gone up in this place to God. But a higher fear and awe falls on us when we witness the struggles of a human soul. Then we say, "One stands here greater than the temple." "This is none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven." There is nothing so interesting to man as man. That is why we read novels, forgetting that no such romances were ever invented as exist by our side in human lives. This will be a happy year if we learn in it to find a new interest in our fellow-men.

But, for such a work, we need a higher inspiration than that of human genius. We must be led by the spirit. What a peace comes to us when we realize that there is such an inspiration always waiting for us; that we need only to consent to be led, and we shall have given us what to think and say and do! Then we are ready for all occasions, then no duty is too hard; for we have a well of water within the soul perpetually flowing,— a guidance and influence sufficient for all things.

Let us remember that we are never asked to do a duty but that power will be given us with which to do it. This year let us grow in grace; let us lean more and more on this inward inspiration; let us be sure that this comfort, this light, this guidance, this strength and peace, may always be ours.

The past year has brought many joys and sorrows. It has taken from us dear and noble friends. It has given us great opportunities. It has brought to us the beauties of nature, the delights of friendship, the glories of an ideal world, the inspirations from on high, the movements of human history, the progress of mankind. Let us be grateful for all, and trust in God for the future.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE STILL HOUR.

THE WALK WITH GOD.

Oh, not alone in saddest plight
My Lord do I require;
Not only in the thickest fight
And in the sevenfold fire;

Not only when the world invites,
In all its pomp arrayed;
Not only when the Tempter fights,
In all his terrors clad.

I would not for some sorest smart
Keep thy dear grace in store;
Nor for my deeply darkened heart
Reserve thy word's blest lore.

When forth I go, not then alone,
Lord, would I walk with thee;
Not only when the sun goes down
I crave thy company.

Not only for some task sublime
Thy succor I implore;
Not only on some solemn time
Thy holy spirit pour.

Oh, ne'er can I my Helper spare,
I want thee all the way;
I want my Saviour everywhere,
I want thee every day!

Lord, for each daily task of mine
I want thy quickening power;
I want thy smile, away to shine
The trouble of each hour.

I want each joy from thee to spring,
Each joy for thee more bright;
Each footstep of thine ordering;
All light seen in thy light.

I want thee through this vale of tears
All up the heavenly road.
Each moment of the eternal years
Shall I possess my God!

—*T. H. Gill.*

Unfeebled will I bring my spirit down to life's closing period. Never shall the genial courage of life desert me. What gladdens me now shall gladden me ever. My imagination shall continue lively and my will unbroken, and nothing shall force from my hand the magic key which opens the mysterious gates of the upper world. I will not look upon the dreaded weakness of age. I pledge myself to supreme contempt of every toil which does not concern the true end of my existence; AND I VOW TO REMAIN FOREVER YOUNG.

The spirit which impels man forward shall never fail me; and the longing which is never satisfied with what has been, but ever goes forth to meet the new, shall still be mine. The glory I shall seek is to know that my aim is infinite, and yet never to pause in my course. I shall never think myself old until my work is done; and that work will not be done while I know and will what I ought. To the end of my life I am determined to grow stronger and more full of life by every act, and more vital through every self-improvement. When the light of my eyes shall fail, and gray hairs shall sprinkle my blonde locks, my spirit shall still smile. No event shall have power to disturb my heart; and the pulse of my inner life shall remain fresh while life endures.—*Schleiermacher.*

O Thou who art the God of hope, fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

May we be full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

May those that are strong bear the infirmities of the weak.

Save us, we beseech thee, O heavenly Father, from being conformed to this world, from thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, from being wise in our own conceit, from being overcome of evil, and enable us to overcome evil with good.

If we have, at any time, held the truth in unrighteousness; if, when we have known God, we have not glorified him as God, nor been thankful; if we have changed thy truth into a lie, and worshipped the creature more than the Creator,—forgive us, we beseech thee, O our Father.

If we have not liked to retain thee in our thoughts, if we have despised thy goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, if our heart has been impenitent and hard, if we have dishonored thee by breaking thy law,—forgive us, we beseech thee, O our Father.

If the good which we would we do not, but the evil which we would not that we do; if to will is present with us, but how to perform that which we will we find not; if, when we would do good, evil is present with us; if we find a law in our members warring against the law of our mind, and bringing

us into captivity to the law of sin in our members,—help us, we beseech thee, O our Father.

May the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus make us free from the law of sin and death, and make us walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit; may we not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we call thee Father.

Being led by thy spirit, may we become thy children.

May nothing separate us from the love of Christ; neither tribulation, nor distress, nor persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor the sword.

In all these may we be more than conquerors through him who loved us.

May neither death nor life, nor angels nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We beseech thee, heavenly Father, that we may be enabled to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to thee, being transformed unto the renewing of our mind.

Whether we live, may we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, may we die unto the Lord.

May we be kindly affectioned one toward another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessities of our brethren; given to hospitality.

May we rejoice with these that rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

May we render unto all their dues.

May we love our neighbor as ourselves.

May we cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light.

Awaken us, O Lord, from our sleep!

Now unto Him that has power to establish us according to the gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ,

To God only wise, be glory, through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.

You cannot work well, except you stop working sometimes and pray. You cannot pray well, except you stop praying sometimes and work.

THE BIBLE CLASS.

ANSWERS TO OCTOBER QUESTIONS.

(As we have not yet received answers to the questions on Norton's argument: we have prepared these answers from his book. Except for the slight changes necessary in condensing, the passages which follow are almost a literal quotation.)

1. What does Norton say of the essential agreement of the four Gospels? (Chapter I., "Genuineness of the Gospels.")

There have been examined about six hundred and seventy manuscripts of the whole or of portions of the Greek text of the Gospels. These were written in different countries and at different periods, probably from the fifth century downward. They have been found in places widely remote from each other,—in Asia, in Africa, and from one extremity of Europe to the other. Besides these manuscripts of the Greek text there are many manuscripts of ancient versions of the Gospels, in different languages of each of the three great divisions of the world just mentioned. There are likewise many manuscripts of the works of the Christian Fathers, abounding in quotations from the Gospels; and especially manuscripts of ancient commentaries on the Gospels, such as those of Origen, who lived in the third century, and of Chrysostom, who lived in the fourth,—in which we find their text quoted, as the different portions of it are successively the subject of remark.

Now, all these different copies of the Gospels, so numerous, so various in their character, so unconnected, offering themselves to notice in parts of the world so remote from each other, concur in giving us essentially the same text.

2. Reasons for thinking the Gospels were guarded from corruption and interpolation.

Because the Christians of the first centuries regarded such interpolation and corruption as almost sacrilegious. The care of any community in preserving its sacred books from corruption is proportioned to the value which they set upon those books; and the degree in which they value them will be proportioned to the interest which they feel in their religion. But no men ever felt that interest more strongly than the Christians of the first two centuries. There is, there-

fore, as we might expect, abundant evidence in their writings that they had as great reverence for the sacred books of our religion and were as little disposed to make or to suffer an admixture of foreign matter with their genuine text as Christians of the present day.

The first writer by whom any one of the Gospels is expressly mentioned is Papias, who lived about the beginning of the second century (a contemporary of the disciples of the apostles). He speaks particularly of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, affirming that they were composed by those individuals, and that the Gospel of Mark was founded on the oral narratives of Peter. He applies to them the title of "*oracles*."

About the middle of the second century Justin Martyr describes the histories of Christ which he used, as written by the apostles and their companions. He says that either these books or the writings of the Jewish prophets were read in Christian churches on the first day of every week. But in the dialogue which he represents himself as having held with Trypho, an unbelieving Jew, he charges the Jews with having expunged certain passages of the Old Testament relating to Christ. To this Trypho answers that the charge seems to him incredible. Justin replies, "It does seem incredible; for to mutilate the Scriptures would be a more fearful crime than the worship of the golden calf, or than the sacrifice of children to demons, or than slaying the prophets themselves." It is not probable that Christians were tampering with their own sacred books at a time when they had such feelings respecting those of the Old Testament.

3. The evidence from the general reception of the Gospels as genuine among the early Christians.

During the last quarter of the second century the Gospels were regarded with the highest reverence, as genuine and sacred books, by the great body of Christians.

Proofs of this are found in the writings of Irenæus (born in the first half of the second century, died just after its close); of Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, before the year 170; of Tertullian, in Carthage; of Clement of Alexandria; (there was a celebrated school in Alexandria for the instruction of Christians, of which Clement was the principal teacher); of Origen (185-254).

It ought to be remembered that the testimony of these writers is valuable, not as proving merely their own belief in the genuineness of the Gospels, but as evidence of the belief of the community to which they belonged.

(We are sorry not to have room for quotations from these writers, some of which are very interesting but we can lend a copy of Norton's book to any member of the Bible class, who will find this statement fully supported by passages from the writers mentioned.)

4. Evidence from the writings of Justin Martyr.

Justin Martyr was of Gentile extraction, born in a city of Samaria. He lived about the year 150. He wrote several works, among them two defences of Christianity ("*Apologies*," as they are called, the original meaning of *apology* being defence, or vindication).

In the writings of Justin there are many allusions to and quotations from the Gospels and the sayings of Christ, often differing in *form* from passages with which they agree substantially. It is very interesting to compare these passages.

But an important point is this: these writings of Justin have been carefully searched, in order to find some passage giving an account of Christ different from the narrations in the four Gospels. But nothing of any importance has been discovered. On the contrary, he gives a great part of the history of Christ in perfect harmony with what is found in the Gospels, sometimes agreeing in words and always in meaning. It is remarkable that in so early a writer as Justin there is so little matter additional to what is contained in the Gospels; so little that we can suppose to be derived from any other source. That we find what we do presents no marvel or difficulty. The phenomenon to be accounted for is that we find no more; and of this phenomenon the only satisfactory explanation is that the Gospels had come down from the apostolic age with such a weight of authority, there was such an entire reliance on their credibility, that it was felt to be unwise and unsafe to blend any uncertain

accounts with the history contained in the Gospels. Such accounts, therefore, were neglected and forgotten. The Gospels extinguished all feebler lights.

5. What is said by Norton of the Gospels of Luke and John?

Between the death of John, the apostle, and the time when Justin wrote,— an interval probably of about fifty years,— there were few Christian writers whose works remain extant. Except from Papias, we have no historical notice of the Gospels.

Papias lived during the first quarter of the second century, and was acquainted, as he informs us, with many of the disciples of the apostles. He wrote a work, now lost, of which some fragments are preserved by Eusebius. In this work (as quoted by Eusebius) Papias mentions the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. It appears from what he says that these Gospels were well known, were attributed to Matthew and to Mark as authors, and, being regarded as authentic, were venerated as oracles.

Luke testifies to the genuineness of his own Gospel, Papias to that of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark. It follows that the authority of all three was established in the time of Papias. Now, this was a period but just after the death of John, when thousands were living who had seen that last survivor of the apostles; many, perhaps, who had made a pilgrimage to Ephesus to behold his countenance and listen to his voice, and hundreds who belonged to the church over which he had presided in person. It is incredible, therefore, that before the time of Papias a spurious Gospel should have been received as his work; and after the time of Papias, when the authority of the first three Gospels was established, the attempt to introduce a Gospel falsely ascribed to John must have been, if possible, still more impracticable.

PROF. HUIDEKOPER'S ARGUMENT.

(We give here an extract from the preface of Prof. Huidekoper's book, thus stating the general tenor of the argument. The position here taken is supported in the book by an overwhelming mass of evidence.)

"During the present century opinions have gained more or less currency that our Gospels are not documents prepared by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The views advanced by those who distrust their alleged authorship may be classified under the following heads: —

"1. Our Gospels were composed toward the close of the second or beginning of the third century; or,

"2. They were, at the foregoing date, selected from a number then in circulation whose value is uncertain; or,

"3. Our Gospels grew until the close of the second century under the hands of Christians, being gradually enlarged and interpolated.

"It is obvious that, if such opinions were correct, the Gospels would be replete with the peculiarities of those who found or added to them. To appreciate this, let us imagine that such documents had been found or interpolated in our own time. If, for instance, during the contest concerning slavery, such documents had been devised or augmented by the abolitionists, they would unquestionably have attributed to the Master condemnation of what they themselves treated as "the sum of all villanies." If, on the other hand, slave-holders had produced or interpolated such documents, they would hardly have failed to make the Master lay down rules for the relation between master and slave.

"Now, it is plain that the early Christians who rode their own hobbies with vehemence, and who were engaged in controversies which to them seemed vital, would not, while fabricating the Master's history, make him silent on the very topics to which they attributed most importance. Let the reader, while perusing the following work, ask himself whether it be credible that the Gospels should have emanated from Christians in the second century, while omitting every trace of their controversies, of their peculiar opinions and phraseology, and, *with one exception*, of their customs; and not only this, but that they should have been ascribed to an authorship which rendered them utterly useless to Christian controversialists in the most serious contest which they waged.

"Had they, even in apostolic times, originated in Gentile lands, nothing but historical truthfulness could have saved them from making Jesus speak on topics uppermost with their intended readers, and from intro-

ducing subjects or phraseology unknown to Palestine."

In a foot-note Prof. Huidekoper adds, "Such views as the foregoing (*i.e.*, those of Strauss) have found a credence explicable only by the general lack of acquaintance with early Christian history."

The position, therefore, is this: the Gospels, if fabricated, interpolated, or gradually compiled from various sources, would be filled with allusions, phrases, expressions, and arguments which were used by the early Christians during the second and third centuries. Our first question is, What were some of the subjects of vital interest to the Christians of the second and third centuries? our second, Do we find mention of these in the Gospels?

(*To be continued.*)

THE CLASS IN AMERICAN HISTORY.

QUESTIONS FOR JANUARY.

When and where was Americus Vespucius born?

Was he an independent discoverer, or did he merely follow where Columbus had led the way?

At what date and under whose auspices did he fit out a squadron for discovery?

Did he, any more than Columbus, ever reach the continent of North America?

Is it now thought that neither he nor Columbus realized the true character of their discoveries?

[Send answers, between February 1 and 10, to Miss S. Minns, 14 Louisburg Square, Boston, Mass.]

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

QUESTIONS FOR JANUARY.

How shall children be taught obedience?

Is it possible, without severity, to train young children to perfect obedience?

Should a child be governed by reason or by authority?

Should children ever be punished? And, if so, how?

If punishment is necessary, may it be inflicted without causing suffering or exciting anger, and yet accomplish the end desired?

[The editor cordially invites readers to contribute short articles on these questions or on any previously published. N.B.—There is no limitation of time at which such papers should be sent: they will be received at any time.]

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Mass.]

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR GIVERS AND RECEIVERS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'In His Name,'" etc., not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send *books* to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

OFFERS.

I shall be glad to send the *New England Magazine* regularly to some one who would enjoy it. Address Miss Ellen C. Morse, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

The Lowell branch of the Cheerful Letter Exchange will send regularly the *Housewife*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, and the *Christian Union* to any one who wishes them. Address Miss Helen A. Whittier, 38 Kirk Street, Lowell, Mass.

I have "Robert Elsmere," which I should be very glad to send and give to any one who would like it. Please address Mrs. William H. Smith, Lexington, Mass., Box 168.

I have paper copies of "Romola" and "Anne of Geierstein" which I will send to any one wishing them. Address Miss H. E. Johnson, Weymouth, Mass.

If any one would like my *Nation* after I have read it, I will send it by mail to any address given me, with pleasure. S. M. L., 20 Hereford Street, Boston, Mass.

The *Golden Rule* for 1877 and 1878 is offered by Miss E. P. Getchell, Newburyport, Mass.

The *Ladies' Home Journal* for a year, as it comes out, is offered by Miss Theodora Willard, 19 Berkeley Street, Cambridge, Mass.

The *Ladies' Home Journal* for 1891, *Every Other Sunday* for 1891, and *Every Other Sunday* as it comes, every two weeks, are offered by Mrs. Henry P. Smith, Concord, Mass.

The Cheerful Letter, as it comes, is offered by Mrs. J. H. Meredith, 242 Marlborough Street, Boston, Mass.

The *Ladies' Home Journal* for 1892 is offered by Mrs. F. A. Pelton, Dedham, Mass.

The *Commonwealth* for a year is offered by Mrs. Andrew McF. Davis, 10 Appleton Street, Cambridge, Mass.

The *Ladies' Home Journal* for the current year is offered by Mrs. A. Farrar, Adams Street, Somerville, Mass.

"Life of Dorothea Dix," by Francis Tiffany, Ruskin's Autobiography, which he calls "Præterita," 2 vols., "Little Brothers of the Air," by Olive Thorne Miller, "Poems," by George Eliot, and "Conversations on Music," by Rubinstein, are offered by Miss E. M. Ward, Hotel Brunswick, Boston, Mass.

"Robert Elsmere"; "General Sketch of History," by Freeman; "Land of Lingering Snow," by Bolles; "Stories told to a Child," 2 vols., by Jean Ingelow; "The Broken Pitcher, and Other Stories"; "Doctor Thorne," by Anthony Trollope; "Selections from Irving's Sketch-book"; "Deserted Village" and "Traveller," by Goldsmith; "Birds in the Bush," by Bradford Torrey; "Queen of Sheba," by T. B. Aldrich; "In a Grass Country," by Mrs. H. L. Cameron; "A Swallow's Wing," by Charles Pekin; "The Right Knock" (a mental cure novel), by N. V. Andrews; "Colonel Quaritch, V.C.," by Rider Haggard; "For Lilias," by Rosa Carey; "Mabel Martin," by Whittier; "Personal Reminiscences: Barham, Harness, and Hodder"; "Outre Mer," by Longfellow; "Life and Voyages of Columbus," by Irving; "Life of Henry Ward Beecher"; "History of a Week," by Mrs. Walford; "Sunday Garland" (paper-bound stories for children); "Songs and Scenes from Goethe's 'Faust'"; "Cape Cod Folks," by Miss McLean; "Alice Lorraine," by Blackmore; "Under the Lime," author of "Christina North"; "Won by Waiting," by Edna Lyall; "Kit and Kitty," by Blackmore; Ware's "Scenes and Characters," 6 vols.; "Picciola"; "The Other Girls," by A. D. T. Whitney; *The Boys' and Girls' Annual;* the *Unitarian*, from November, 1892, for the year; the *Ladies' Home Journal* for 1892; the *Century*, from November, 1883, through October, 1884, containing "The Breadwinners"; the *Century* for February and September, 1888; *Wide Awake* for January and February, 1883, and December, 1891; *St. Nicholas* for October, 1887; *English Illustrated Magazine* for December, 1887; *Scribner's* for January, 1887. The above list of books is offered by Mrs. William Cook, 71 Appleton Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Miss F. H. Curtis, 445 Centre Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass., offers to *lend* the following books: "Ten Times One," "Man without a Country," "How they Lived at Hampton," "Neither Scrip nor Money," "A Christmas Story," "Daily Bread," "In His Name," "A Maltese Cross," "Philip Nolan's Friends," "Mr. Tangier's Vacation," "A Popular Life of Christopher Columbus," "Seven Spanish Cities," "Sunday-school Stories" (all of these by Rev. E. E. Hale); "Mosses from an Old Manse," "Twice-told Tales," and "The Scarlet Letter," by Nathaniel Hawthorne; "Two Tales," by Mary Wilkins; "Aunt Diana," by Rosa N. Carey; "Madam How and Lady Why," by Charles Kingsley; "Darin Mooruck," "Three Men of Wallarva," and "Samuel an Arapahoe," by Kercheval; "The Golden Legend," by Longfellow; Longfellow's "Prose Works," Vols. I. and II.; "My Lady Legend," by Anan von Rydingsvärd;

"Christmas Stories and March Violets," by E. P. Cordner; "Lake Champlain," by W. H. H. Murray; "Old Creole Days," by George Cable; "Memoirs of Dolly Madison"; "War of Independence," by John Fiske; "Huckleberries," by Rose T. Cooke; "Life, Letters, and Journal of Louisa M. Alcott," edited by Mrs. Edna D. Cheney; "A Garland for Girls," by Louisa Alcott; "Miss Toosey's Mission"; "Laddie"; "Our Helen," "The Asbury Twins," and "In Old Quinnebassett," by Sophie May; "Old Ma'am'selle's Secret"; "Good Reading, Original and Selected"; "Bits of Talk," by H. H.; "Verses," by Susan Coolidge; "A New England Girlhood," by Lucy Larcom; "Life, Genius, and Writings of John G. Whittier," by W. S. Kennedy; "Laughter" (Little Classics); "The Story of Archer Alexander," by W. G. Eliot; "Young Folks' History of Germany," Yonge; "History of the City of Washington."

(The books in the above list, unlike all others offered in these columns, are to be returned after reading. Miss Curtis will pay postage one way.)

[Please note that a book sent by mail needs careful wrapping. The corners, especially, should be protected. One thickness of paper is not enough.—Ed.]

Miss Mary K. Weston, 11 Grinnell Street, Greenfield, Mass., and Mrs. Thomas L. Johnson, 1711 Kennard Street, Cleveland, Ohio, offer each a copy of the *Christian Register* (weekly).

Miss S. R. Barker, Bangor, Me., offers a copy of "In His Name."

Miss M. E. Lilquist, 18 P.O. Square, Boston, offers the *Chautauquan* for several years. This magazine contains excellent reading matter both from an educational and literary point of view.

Mrs. H. C. Weston, 177 Beacon Street, Boston, will give and send any of the following books: "Cranford," Mrs. Gaskell; "Young Lucretia, and Other Stories," Mary E. Wilkins; "Jane Austen's Life," Oscar Fay Adams; "The Scarlet Letter," Hawthorne; "Men and Women," Browning; "Over the Teacups," O. W. Holmes; "A New England Nun," etc., "Mary E. Wilkins; "Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics," Palgrave; "Bow of Orange Ribbon," Amelia Barr; "Old Ma'am'selle's Secret," Marlitt.

REQUESTS.

I would like a good illustrated Republican paper and "Jo's Boys," by Miss Alcott. Should also like a book for a boy five years old. Mrs. E. M. Hassinger, Nesbit, Logan County, Nebraska.

Carl Niler, Alburgh Springs, Vt., would like *Our Dumb Animals*.

Mrs. Mary Caldwell Evans, Shelbyville, Tenn., sends the following appeal for books for her lending library:—

"I have been keeping this library open single-handed for nearly six years, and have so few subscribers that we can only get a few magazines; have not had a new book for three years, except those I have given, until a few persons—two, in fact—in Salem have given a little timely help. This library was given by a Northern woman, Mrs. W. S. Eakin of New London, Conn. The town was not able to keep it up (though we "befo' de wah" were called "Little Boston"), and let the Young Men's Christian Association have it for their rooms. During my absence one summer that organization was broken up, and persons helped themselves to the books they wanted. The remainder were dumped in an unlocked room over a drug-store. I gathered what I could together, and a few women give two dollars and a half a year, and a girl goes up on Wednesdays and Saturdays; and we go and exchange the magazines, and would books, if there were any which we had not read. There are some invalids here who want books nearly as much as we do, and I let them have some whenever I can; but you happy Boston women, with all your opportunities of culture, can scarcely conceive the hunger and longing, which often amounts to pining, of women shut up in a country village,—some of them teachers,— with no opportunities and no recreation, when they see the advertisements of so many good and cheap books. So you see that, though we still have the name, we are not really a live library, not even able to buy the Christmas numbers of the magazines to brighten up our mortal dulness." . . .

(We would suggest to Mrs. Evans to consult the lists of books offered by Mrs. Cook in the December and January numbers of *The Cheerful Letter*, and apply for those she wants. Also, to those persons wishing to send any considerable number of books to Mrs. Evans, that they first send her a

list, so that they may not run the risk of duplicating any of the few books the library now possesses.)

I would like very much to get the *Harper's Monthly* or *Century*. Some one is now sending me the *Christian Register*, which we like very much; and some one sent me last winter the entire 1888 issue of *Harper's Monthly*. These books and papers are greatly appreciated by us out here in Texas. We are a long way from any library. W. F. James, M.D., Bibb, Comanche Co., Tex.

Mrs. Maria Souther, West Levant, Me., would like to receive the *Ladies' Home Journal*, the *Household*, *St. Nicholas*, *Housekeeper's Weekly*, or *any* magazines or papers. She says: "I have been an invalid eighteen long years. Please give me, dear band, a little of your sunshine and sympathy, to encourage me to bear all this sickness. Write to me, sisters of Cheerful Letter Exchange. Love and sympathy to all."

(Mrs. Souther's request in December number for "Two Tales," printed weekly, was, by accident, printed "1,100 Tales").

I am a mother that likes to read, and to have reading for my children. I have one little girl; and I would like to have the *Harper's Young People* or *Wide Awake*. The rest are boys, and (for them?) I would like some of the monthlies or weeklies that are offered, if it would not be asking too much. Mrs. C. E. Deuel, South Trenton, N.Y.

To-day we received the November number of *The Cheerful Letter*, and we felt greatly indebted to you and all who are sending so much comfort to the unfortunate. Words are inadequate to express how much we do appreciate your kindness.

I received fatal injuries from a shell at the battle of Hanover Court House, Va.,—injury of the spine. I have been partially paralyzed all these long years, until six years ago I became helpless. I have no use of my right side or legs. I have a wheel-invalid-chair, so I am as comfortable as circumstances will permit. I suffer a great deal of pain; but I never murmur, daily bearing the cross of Christ in this world that I may by and by change the cross for the crown, and enter into that rest that is prepared for those who patiently wait here. I also was a prisoner of war at Castle Thunder, Libbey, Florence, and Andersonville. I was first to my country's call, with the Ellsworth Zouaves, at the fall of Sumter; afterward, of the Ellsworth Avengers, the 44th New York Volunteers, I was color sergeant, Army of the Potomac. Also, I am a soldier of the cross, patiently awaiting the summons to come up higher. I do not receive the *Nation*. Would be pleased to receive it, or anything that you might suggest. If you still have Drummond's "Greatest Thing in the World," I would very much like to see it, or *Harper's Magazine*. I have to write with my left hand. It is quite difficult for me to write. Mrs. Weed will write at an early day. Kindest regards. From your afflicted friend, Theo. D. Weed, Mason City, Ia., Box 309.

The requests in the December number of *The Cheerful Letter* from Mrs. Stowell, Mrs. S. E. Jackson, and Mrs. Souther have, so far as we know, received no response. If any one has sent the books asked for by these correspondents, a card sent to Mrs. Millet will be a favor. It helps us very much to know when books are sent. Also, those who do not receive the books for which they ask are cordially invited to write to us again.

Dear friends, I take this opportunity to thank all who have so kindly written me and sent reading. Every letter was a ray of sunshine, and the reading cheered me on and on. Among the papers sent me was a little pair of gloves just the size for my little three-year-old girl. The lady who sent this sweet token of kindness would have felt doubly repaid, could she have witnessed my darling's delight. We are all liable to meet misfortunes, and there is no knowing in what form it may come to us. I would like to become a member of the Cheerful Letter Exchange. Oh, what a comfort it has been to me! If we can so much feel for each other, how much more can our heavenly Father feel for his poor afflicted children! I wish to warmly thank all who wrote me, but could not reply as I should like to do. Respectfully, Mrs. M. E. Oades, Olympia, Wash.

It would seem as if the things for which we do return some expressions of gratitude were only the blessings which come to the lower part of our nature,—traditional thanksgivings, if I may call them so, for the mercies men in ages of barbarism felt to be greatest. We say "grace before and after

meat." We have forms of public thanks for good harvests and for victory over our enemies. These are well. Even that poor formality of grace, as it is commonly understood, would be sad to abandon, profaned though it so often be by the levity of its insertion between the paragraphs of a jesting tale or the retorts of an angry argument. But why are no other blessings save food and safety made themes of praise? These are the dews about our feet: have we no thanks for the showers on our heads? It might almost be questioned whether any of the peculiar mercies which we possess over those which belonged to our ancestors have been recognized in any social worship by thanksgiving. What forms have been ever proposed for blessing God for the great discoveries of modern science and the progress of political freedom?—for our fire-horse, the steam-engine, whose fodder of coal was laid up so carefully a million years ago; for the facilitation of all kindly intercourse throughout the world; for medical and surgical discoveries without number for the relief of human suffering; for the unspeakable blessing of a righteous jurisprudence? Have we no thanks for things like these? Should the Benedicite of the "heir of all ages" be no stave the longer than that of the serf and monk of the centuries when oppression and ignorance darkened Europe with their double night? Methinks that each generation of men ought to add a strophe, and that ours ought to add many a strophe, to the universal hymn of God's happy children. *F. P. Cobbe.*

The human soul requires for its food, to keep it in full life, a great variety of nutriment. It lives by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God.

Nature is one of these words. The grandeur, tenderness, variety, harmony, of nature, are divine words, in which are life; and this life is the light of man. To the most crowded streets of a city there comes the beauty of dawn and eve, sunrise and sunset. Over the head of the tired laborer hang Orion and the Pleiades, Sirius and Arcturus. Little children in courts and lanes see the wonder of falling and drifting snow. How these sights of nature feed the soul, and make a large part of its life! —*J. F. Clarke.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

Dear friends, we need about one hundred more subscribers to carry our paper through the year. As our year begins in June, it is desirable to increase our list as soon as possible,— before the end of January, if practicable; for those who subscribe in the spring may prefer to begin with the second year. At present we have back numbers for those who desire to have the whole series. We hope that in asking for subscribers it will be explained that people do not necessarily take this paper for their own benefit, but because it is a medium of communication with those who live in lonely places and who need the cheer and comfort which comes from those who live near literary and social centres. We have not room to print all the letters which show how much this little paper is needed. Especially the Book Club is growing more and more useful. It would be such a pity to be obliged to postpone or omit printing the paper regularly that we hope those who are able will exert themselves to obtain the subscribers needed, and so float us over the difficulties of the first year,—always the hardest in such an enterprise as ours.

In sending articles for insertion in *The Cheerful Letter*, please remember to write *on one side only* of your paper.

The editor regrets and apologizes for the fact that she can no longer answer all the personal letters she receives. It has become impossible.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Mass. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Will all subscribers or receivers of *The Cheerful Letter*, whose copy does not come regularly, or comes not correctly addressed, be kind enough to notify Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

New Subscribers.—Please send *subscriptions* for the paper to Miss F. L. Close, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Articles for the paper may be sent for the present to Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.